

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fiscal Year 2008

In FY 08, as with every year in the past decade, emergency responses increased again this year, by 1.8%: EMS emergencies increased by 2% to 3,856 and fire calls increased by 1.1% to 1,366. This is the second year in a row that we have responded to more than 5,000 emergencies in a single year. There were no fire fatalities but 1 civilian and 39 firefighters were injured during these incidents. Our Fire Prevention effort continues to be stressed as the Fire Captain currently assigned here was out for medical reasons for 5 months and the Assistant Chief who supervises Fire Prevention programming also functions as the Town's Emergency Manager (Civil Defense Director) and was assigned to the Town Manager for four months in this capacity. Our activity in Fire Prevention increased again in FY 08, chiefly due to more oversight time required at construction projects on the three college campuses.

Throughout the decade, we have had three major concerns relative to our ability to deliver quality EMS and fire safety services to Amherst's citizens. First, the numbers of simultaneous emergency incidents that occur on a daily basis strip our on-duty forces to zero. In these circumstances, we need to rely upon off-duty career firefighters to respond back to the Central Fire Station during the normal workweek and then depend upon call and student volunteer firefighters to provide coverage nights and weekends and for all incidents whereby we have no apparatus to immediately send for simultaneous emergency calls. Such situations can only be solved by increasing the number of career firefighters on duty to a minimum of nine per shift. We continue to have the smallest career force in the state for our population range. The second major issue is the high injury rate to our firefighters – the highest in the state. This also relates to the call volume per firefighter ratio, also the highest in the state. Our final concern relates to response times of ambulances and fire apparatus to South Amherst. It exceeds the national standards for emergency medicine and fire suppression delivery, in some cases by up to twice the recommended time. This situation only can be rectified by adding a fire station in South Amherst.

We continued to receive benefits from a \$500,000 federal grant (SAFER) received in November, 2005, which added five (5) new firefighter/paramedic positions to our Department. This grant gradually requires Amherst to assume more of the salary burden over five years (this year the feds paid 75% of the salaries). In FY 08, we received another federal SAFER Act grant for \$181,000 for three years to assist in the recruitment and retention of call and volunteer firefighters. This grant partially pays for a career Fire Captain, reimburses the Town for emergency medical technician courses, fire science courses, provides some medical insurance coverage for call firefighters, provides for travel to the National Fire Academy in Maryland and assists with stationary firefighter recruiting modems at the colleges and at the High School.

In terms of personnel changes, Captain Roland Briere retired after serving with our Department since 1974. Firefighter/paramedic William Klaus was promoted to Captain. As a result of preparing for a Department-wide re-organization to address serious deficiencies in the Fire Prevention and Training programs, the Town Manager authorized that two additional promotions to Fire Captain be made. Firefighter/paramedic Paul Theilman and Firefighter/EMT-Intermediate John Ingram were promoted as a result of a competitive examination process. Firefighter/paramedic Casey Bergeron was hired to fill the vacancy created by the Briere retirement. We now have 31 paramedics on staff who continues to provide the premier Advanced Life Support service in Western Massachusetts.

Our SAFE (Student Awareness of Fire Education) program in the schools completed another successful year under the guidance of Captains Tim Goodhind and John Ingram. This program has been touted by the State Fire Marshal's Office as one of the best in the Commonwealth. Amherst Fire personnel continue to seek ways to improve it each year, such as the pancake breakfast initiated last year. In FY 07, we expanded our program to teach the elderly fall and fire prevention as well.

Captains McKay and Olmstead continued to coordinate the tactical paramedic team, which interfaces with Amherst, State and UMASS police at civil disobedience events where immediate medical assistance may be needed under less than ideal situations. This program has six firefighter/paramedics who are specially trained to render emergency medical care to police and citizens under fire. It was an outgrowth of the Columbine High School tragedy.

The Department's Technical Rescue Team, led by Captain Sterling and comprised of ten career firefighters, continues to improve their capabilities to handle confined space, high angle, collapse and other technical rescues each year. We have been attempting to secure structural collapse rescue equipment from federal and college sources for the past four years without success, so we are acquiring this equipment through the budget process in FY 09.

Assistant Chief Zlogar and firefighter/paramedic Shanley led the Department's wilderness search and rescue team.

The Town and the firefighter's union created an EMS Training Committee in FY 07, to assist our EMS program in terms of training, continuing education, and a quality assurance program for our paramedics and EMTs so that we continue to render excellence in medical care.

Also initiated contractually in FY 07 was the Department's Training Committee, comprised of career firefighters and chaired by Assistant Chief Stromgren. This Committee maps out Department fire and rescue training on a bi-annual basis. Career firefighters carry out much of it on shift between answering emergency calls. Call and student firefighters accomplish most of it during their weekly regularly-scheduled drills.

Captain Sell continues as a member of the County's child fire-setter invention group. Captain Johnson and firefighters Tebo and Gaughan comprise the Fire Department component of the Town's Fire Investigation Unit, along with a state police trooper and two Amherst police officers.

Firefighter/paramedic Martell took over the membership on TRIAD, from Captain Childs, to assist with installing signs for the "What's Your Number" project. Over 1,600 homes and businesses now have street number signs posted in front yards to allow police and fire personnel to find them quicker in an emergency.

Assistant Chief Zlogar is the Town's Emergency Manager (formerly Civil Defense Director). He is responsible for coordinating Homeland Security issues for the Town, and in FY 07, began a project directed by Town Manager Shaffer to update the Town's emergency plans.

Captain Theilman, firefighter Adair and firefighter/paramedics Dion and Szewczynski continue in their capacity as our mechanics, saving the Town thousands of dollars repairing our vehicle fleet, which numbers 25 vehicles and 6 specialty trailers.

Assistant Chief Zlogar, Captain Sell and firefighter/paramedics Roy, Martell and Bascomb are members of the state Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team, quartered in Chicopee. This team responds to all hazardous materials emergencies in Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire counties with equipment provided by the Commonwealth.

Our call and student volunteer firefighters continue to function as a vital element of our Fire Department. We could not provide the level of emergency services for the Town without them, especially when all of our career on-duty members are committed to emergencies.

The citizen-based Fire Station Study Committee completed their work in FY 07. They recommended that a new sub-station be built in South Amherst to bring response times in line with the recommended national standards. As our 1928 Central Station has reached its useful life, they also recommended that it be replaced. The Joint Capital Planning Committee now will need to align these recommendations with other Town needs and with recommendations from the new Comprehensive Plan before moving back to Town Meeting.

The Hadley Route 9 re-construction project finally was completed during FY 08 and once again, we experienced minor delays in our ambulances traversing to and returning from the Cooley Dickinson Hospital in Northampton.

Captain William Klaus continued to be assigned solely to fire prevention duties. At any given time, approximately 50 construction projects are ongoing which require Fire Department oversight for Fire and Building Code compliance. Even with his assistance, we continue to be overwhelmed in this area. There now is more coordination between Inspection Services and the Health Department with regard to plan review and inspections, with the hope of streamlining the process for businesses. The Town purchased a new software system that will allow the Fire, Health, Inspection Services, Planning and Public Works Departments to share information about projects instantly. This will result in more efficiency and better service to the public and businesses.

As a result of the tragic nightclub fire in Rhode Island in 2004, the Massachusetts legislature now requires fire sprinklers in all nightclubs, bars, dance halls and similar entertainment venues with occupancy of 100 or more. A total of 8 businesses had to sprinker their properties and 4 reduced their occupancy levels through construction or variances to avoid the installation of sprinklers.

Amherst continues to have the smallest career firefighter contingent in the state for our population range (28,000-40,000) and is one of the busiest Departments in terms of emergency responses and fire prevention activities. Every year the workload increases with no sustentative increase in resources. The mental and physical stress this level of activity produces is chiefly reflected in our high injury rate. Statewide and national statistics suggest that we should have a minimum of 16 staff on duty, yet we have 7. The increasing number of simultaneous emergency calls is presenting a public safety crisis when we have few, if any, resources remaining to answer the next call. Town Manager Shaffer has been able to secure additional funding for fire/EMS services from the University, and is engaging Amherst College and Hampshire College officials

in meaningful talks surrounding a similar payment. We hope this leads to Amherst College and Hampshire College agreements in FY 09 so that Fire Department minimum staffing can be increased without relying upon Amherst taxpayers to do so.

Amherst's citizens need to be recognized for their continued fire-safe practices and for the cooperation we receive daily during emergencies and inspections. Amherst firefighters are to be congratulated for their dedication to duty, insuring the public safety each day, and maintaining their high standards to deliver quality emergency medical care to Hadley, Leverett, Pelham and Shutesbury as well as here in Amherst.

Reports on fire and inspection statistics, emergency medical services, Department training, and the Call and Student Forces follow. This material was authored by Assistant Chiefs Mike Zlogar and Lindsay Stromgren, Captain Tim Goodhind, and Call Deputy Chief Edward Mientka, Jr.

Respectfully submitted,
Keith E. Hoyle, Fire Chief

6 YEAR STATISTICAL RECORD

	FY 08	FY 07	FY 06	FY 05	FY 04	FY 03
EMS RESPONSES	3,856	3,780	3,556	3,340	3,339	
FIRE RESPONSES	1,366	1,351	1,254	1,358	1,367	1292
TOTAL:	5,222	5,131	4,810	4,698	4,706	4592
FIRE PREVENTION	2,561	2,421	2,996	2,570	2,320	2005
FIRE LOSS IN \$	387,910	2,785,570	476,000	519,225	473,460	895000

FIRE DEPARTMENT VEHICLES

Engine 1: 2001 Emergency One 1500 gpm pumper
 Engine 2: 2003 Emergency One 1500 gpm pumper
 Engine 3: 1995 Central States 1500 gpm pumper
 Engine 4: 1999 KME 1500 gpm pumper
 Engine 5: 1990 Emergency One 1500 gpm pumper
 Engine 6: 1976 Maxim 1000 gpm pumper
 Ladder 1: 1988 LTI 105 foot aerial platform with 1250 gpm pump
 Rescue 1: 2006 Emergency One Spartan heavy rescue
 Rescue 2: 1994 GMC light-duty rescue
 Tanker 1: 1972 Military 6wd 1300 gallon capacity
 A-11: 1997 Horton Ford ambulance
 A-12: 2007 Horton GMC ambulance
 A-13: 2003 Horton Navistar ambulance
 A-14: 2004 Horton Navistar ambulance
 A-15: 2001 Horton Navistar ambulance
 R-1: 1985 Navistar stake-body truck
 R-2: 2000 Ford F-350 4wd pick-up
 R-3: 1993 Chevrolet 4wd pick-up
 R-4: 1984 Chevrolet Military 4wd brush truck
 R-5: 1997 Dodge van
 R-7: 1995 Ford Crown Victoria
 R-8: 2000 Ford Crown Victoria
 X-1: 2007 Ford 500
 X-2: 2005 Mercury Sable wagon
 X-3: 2004 Mercury Marquis
 X-6: 1998 Ford Explorer 4wd
 Utility: 2001 John Deere ATV 4wd
 Utility: 2003 Arctic Cat snowmobile (shares trailer with above)
 Trailer: 1992 FEMA COMMANDPOST
 Trailer: 1997 Aerolite (SAFE program)
 Trailer: 2003 state Mass Decontamination Unit
 Trailer: 2004 state Mass Casualty Incident supply unit
 Boat: 2004 Avon zodiac with trailer

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

EMS continues as the component that generates the majority of our emergency traffic, and again in FY 08, we increased our responses to 3,856 responses. With our new federal SAFER grant hires, we now have 31 career firefighter/paramedics, more than any other western Massachusetts Fire Department.

We continue to provide EMS to Hadley, Leverett, Pelham and Shutesbury, and these communities (along with UMASS) pay a per-resident fee to us for this service. Just under 28% of our total EMS activity goes to non-Amherst communities and the additional stipend charges to non-Amherst responses enacted in FY 06 continue to increase revenue collection in this regard. The Town Manager is aggressively pursuing additional revenue sources with regards to EMS charges.

Normally we can staff only 3 ambulances simultaneously. Only 36% of the time or less can we staff 4 ambulances with on-duty personnel. Nearly 40% of our total EMS calls required some sort of advanced life support (ALS) intervention. This is consistent with our experience since we expanded to ALS care over two decades ago.

Our fifth ambulance finally was equipped with ALS paramedic gear during the fiscal year. During the workweek, we now re-call career staff to back-fill the station when all on-duty staff is committed to emergencies, so the possibility of utilizing the fifth ambulance for ALS calls has increased.

Department EMTs, Intermediates and Paramedics train continuously during the year to maintain state certifications for the EMT level to which they are certified. Personnel take advantage of coursework sponsored within the Fire Department and from outside sources depending upon budgetary commitments. An EMS Training Committee was created by the bargaining agreement between Local 1764 IAFF and the Town and this Committee has been very active at establishing training plans and curriculums for skill and knowledge improvements. The Field Training Program for new paramedics, EMT-I's and EMT-Bs was re-written to provide for more directed training supervised by experienced paramedic mentors.

The Fire Department has been working with the Amherst Police and other area Police Departments to provide first aid and defibrillator training for area first responders. We also are providing this training in the schools and other Town Departments.

The Emergency Medical Service did not change significantly in FY 08. The number of calls showed increases similar to the past several years.

The fifth ambulance was equipped with supplies and equipment required for paramedic-level care. A change in the station coverage policy that calls career members to duty makes available paramedic staffing when the on-duty crews are committed to other emergency calls.

An EMS Training Committee was created. The committee meets monthly to plan training to address recertification requirements and skill and knowledge improvements. The field training program for new EMT at all levels was rewritten to provide more directed training supervised by experienced EMT-paramedic mentors.

We continue agreements with Greenfield Community College and Mercy Medical Center as a site for the students to complete the field skills portion of the paramedic training program.

New technologies & treatments are being considered for emergency medical services. As the equipment is acquired and EMT-paramedics trained, our ability to provide advanced-level care in the field will be improved.

The Fire Department is working with Amherst Police and other area Police Departments to provide first responder and defibrillator training for first responders. Firefighter/EMTs are providing CPR and defibrillator training for staff in the schools, Bangs Center, Town Hall and Conservation Departments. Training and support is provided to private organizations who are installing and maintaining public access defibrillators.

FY 08 EMS RESPONSES

Amherst:	2,000
Belchertown:	34
Hadley:	741
Leverett:	79
Pelham:	53
Shutesbury:	64
Sunderland:	85
Amherst College:	92
Hampshire College:	77
<u>UMass:</u>	<u>626</u>

Total Responses: **3,851**

FIRE PREVENTION STATISTICS

Building Inspections

Home Inspections (Chapter 148, s26F and new construction)	308
Multi-family dwellings (Chapter 148, s26C)	237
Construction Plan Reviews	
1 and 2 family residential	61
Commercial and multi-family	44
Amherst College	26
Hampshire College	10
University of Massachusetts	126
Fire Protection System installations and alterations	374
Site Plan Reviews (Planning Board)	47

Life Safety Inspections

Restaurants	72
Nursing and Rest Homes	7
Health Care facilities	20
Inns and Theaters	26
Fraternity and Sorority	27
Public Schools	31
Private Schools	26
Childcare	14
Public Buildings	3
Elder Housing	18
Temporary use (Chapter 304)	10
Other buildings	3

Inspections and Permits

Oil burner installations	135
LPG installations	59
UST removals	9
UST installations	0
AST installations	0
Tank truck inspections	2
Fireworks and pyrotechnic displays	3
Dumpster Permits	59
Total Open Burning Permits	735

Public Education Programs

Open House	1
SAFE	53
Community Programs	7
CPR and defibrillators	8

FIRE DEPARTMENT RESPONSES*
JULY 1, 2007 – JUNE 30, 2008

* Statistics include fire apparatus responses only. Ambulance calls
are listed under the EMS section of the Fire Department report.

RESPONSES by CATEGORY

FIRES:

Structure:73
Vehicle:10
Rubbish:22
Brush:13
Other:27

Subtotal – Fires145

RESCUE: (includes vehicle accidents).....212

HAZARDOUS CONDITION:99

FALSE ALARMS:

Malicious alarm:43
System Malfunction:224
Unintentional:461
Good Intent Call:.....41
Bomb Scare:5
Other False alarms:10

Subtotal – False Alarms784

SERVICE CALL:50

OTHER CALLS:76

TOTAL FY 08 FIRE RESPONSES:.....1,366

TYPE of ALARMS

STILL ALARMS:.....1,078	RESCUE/VEHICLE ACCIDENT:.....152
BOX ALARMS:47	OTHER:59
RECALLS:.....1	Mutual Aid <u>TO</u> other communities:.....29
STATION COVERAGE*:.....156	Mutual Aid <u>FROM</u> other communities:.....0

*Station coverage does not include nightly coverage by the Student Force during the academic year.

FIRE LOSSES & CASUALTIES

FIRE DOLLAR LOSSES: (includes contents)

Buildings & other structures	\$366,500
Vehicles & other equipment	\$19,000
<u>Other</u>	<u>\$2,419</u>
TOTAL	\$387,910

CIVILIAN FIRE INJURIES	1
CIVILIAN FIRE FATALITIES	0
FIREFIGHTER INJURIES	2

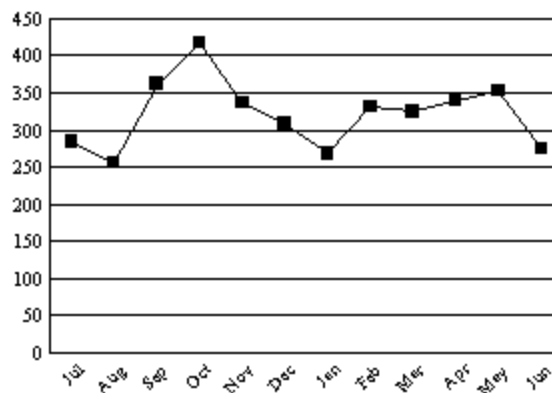
By Town	Fire	%	EMS	%
Amherst	1337	97.9	2795	72.5
Belchertown	4	.3	34	.9
Hadley	8	.6	741	19.2
Leverett	1	.1	79	2.0
Northampton	9	.7	0	.0
Other	4	.3	5	.1
Pelham	2	.1	53	1.4
Shutesbury	0	.0	64	1.7
Sunderland	1	.1	85	2.2
TOTALS	1366		3856	

By Month	Fire	%	EMS	%
Jul	108	7.9	284	7.4
Aug	101	7.4	256	6.6
Sep	139	10.2	362	9.4
Oct	131	9.6	417	10.8
Nov	89	6.5	337	8.7
Dec	102	7.5	308	8.0
Jan	106	7.8	268	7.0
Feb	127	9.3	331	8.6
Mar	117	8.6	325	8.4
Apr	121	8.9	340	8.8
May	110	8.1	353	9.2
Jun	115	8.4	275	7.1
TOTALS	1366		3856	

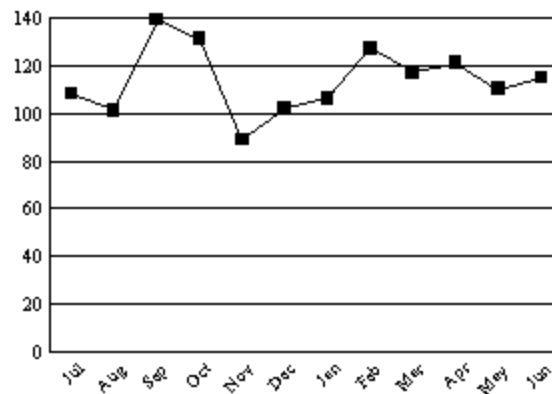
These are the totals for Amherst with the colleges removed.

	Fire	EMS
Amherst (only)	927	2000
Amherst College	75	92
Hampshire College	136	77
UMASS	199	626

EMS calls only (by month)



Fire incidents only (by month)



FIRE TRAINING

During FY 08 members of all three forces (Permanent, Call & Student) were again able to take advantage of course offerings from both the Massachusetts and National Fire Academies. Seventeen department members traveled to the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland in September for a weekend of training on a variety of subjects. A number of members attended classes sponsored by the Massachusetts Fire Academy, both at their Stow, Massachusetts training facility and at regional offerings in local communities.

The Call and Student firefighters continued with their weekly drills throughout the year, covering a wide variety of basic firefighting and specialized topics. Eighteen new student firefighters along with fifteen returning student firefighters completed the annual week of basic training in August. The week included two trips to the Springfield Fire Academy for live fire training.

As in past years, members of our specialized rescue teams also conducted their own drills throughout the year, including the quarterly, day-long drills for the Technical Rescue team.

All members of the department participated in training on specialized topics including vehicle extrication training at a local salvage yard and familiarization training at the new UMass power plant as it was being built.

A new program was implemented in January by the fire training committee for the full-time Permanent Force members. This program consists of a two-year rotating schedule. The program was designed to assure that certain basic firefighting and rescue skills are reviewed at least once every two years. The schedule is divided up into monthly topics for each group to complete. The goal was to adopt a schedule that could be realistically met by the on-duty firefighters given their high volume of emergency calls.

Another project, electronic training reports, which was recommended by the training committee last year, was developed this year and was implemented on July 1st 2008. This new database method of tracking training for all department members replaces outdated paper training reports. The database enables the department to better track the number of training hours each member receives throughout the year as well as track which topics are covered. This training database will be used to track both fire and EMS related training. The database method of documenting training also brings us more into compliance with NFPA recommendations for firefighter training.

During the upcoming year, we will continue to conduct monthly on-duty training, as well as conduct training on new equipment and procedures. Upcoming specialized topics for training will include further training at the UMass power plant as it becomes operational, training for firefighter rescue, and training on new radio equipment and “Mayday” procedures.

AMHERST FIRE DEPARTMENT

Call Force

Fiscal Year 2008

As a branch of Amherst Fire Department that serves to augment the department's Career Force, the Call Force may be called in to respond to an immediate fire emergency or called to the station when full-time career resources are committed to fire or emergency medical calls. By assignment, the Call Force operates a 1988 LTI 105' aerial platform (Ladder 1), and a 1999 KME pumper (Engine 4). Call Force personnel were dispatched for service 151 times throughout FY 2008. These included 47 box alarms and 21 other calls which included fire alarm activations, motor vehicle accidents, and first responder service to emergency medical incidents. In addition, the Call Force was called into the station 73 times to provide fire suppression coverage for the town. While in service, the Call Force was dispatched to 14 emergency calls.

This was another busy year for mutual aid requests. Call Force mutual aid responses included a Sunderland barn fire, a condominium complex fire in East Longmeadow, delivery of the Mass Decontamination Unit to South Hadley, two structure fires in Northampton, the Parson's Paper Company mill fire in Holyoke and a house fire in Leverett.

The Call Force is authorized to have 21 members. With the departures of Call Lt. Marc Liberatore, and firefighters Kate Kelly and Andrew Welch, a hiring process was required and conducted. Allison Lavery, Randy Lisle, and Abdullah Nizamani were hired and entered our recruit training program. With a return of Michelle Choquette and acquisition of former student force firefighters Dane Scantling and Dan Masloski, our roster was filled. At the close of the fiscal year our roster had 10 Massachusetts Certified Emergency Medical Technicians, 10 qualified pump operators, and 9 qualified operators of our aerial platform. We were pleased to announce the promotions of Sam Broder and Dave Pollack to the rank of Lieutenant.

The Call Force maintains a high level of training through regular weekly drills, Massachusetts Firefighting Academy training, National Firefighting Academy courses, EMT continuing education units, first responder and other specialized training programs. Other initiatives included providing a recruit training program, a pump operator course, and aerial platform training. Lt. Broder served as an instructor for the intensive annual Student Force Training Week.

Call Force members were proud to again assist with the Department's annual National Fire Prevention Week Open House, the annual Student Awareness for Fire Safety Education (SAFE) graduation, as well as providing fire protection during the 4th of July and Winterfest fireworks displays. A crew was selected to provide a demonstration setup and operation of the Mass Decon Unit at a county fire service class in Belchertown. Other services included staffing for snow emergencies, conducting open burning inspections, and permit processing. Call firefighters appreciate the opportunity to continue to serve the Town of Amherst.

Respectfully submitted

Edward J. Mientka Jr, Deputy Chief
Amherst Fire Dept. Call Force

STUDENT VOLUNTEER FORCE

Thirty student volunteer firefighters, mostly from UMass, continued to augment our career and call firefighters. During FY 08, 9 students lived at the North Fire Station, and the students had their pumper in-service at the station 113 hours a week (Monday-Friday: 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. - Fridays at 6:00 p.m. continuously until Mondays at 7:00 a.m.). The remainder of the week, they are on-call similar to our call and off-duty career firefighters.

The students responded to 189 fire runs during FY 08, down 15% from last year. Their training is similar to that of our call firefighters. On daily shifts, training occurs for 90 minutes, with the entire student contingent training every Thursday night for 3 hours. We do not expect that they will function at the same level as our career professionals (as they are not paramedics and most are not EMTs, they cannot staff an ambulance), but they perform a critical ancillary service and sometimes arrive first at emergency calls, including fires, as occurred a handful of times during the year. In these instances, it is important that they carry out their duties and control the incident until other help can arrive. Consistently they have performed well for us.

Student firefighters staff one pumper and during actual fires, also respond with a squad truck and extra self-contained breathing apparatus, spare air cylinders and firefighter rehabilitation supplies. They maintain our Command Board (accounts for locations of firefighters inside buildings) and usually bring an ambulance and a squad to the scene with extra personnel as well.

Student firefighters also attended other training facilities besides the instruction received here. Some of those sites were the State Firefighting Academy in Stow, the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and the Springfield Fire Department Training Center.

In April, 21 new student firefighters began training to replace graduating seniors for FY 08. We should start FY 09 with somewhere around 36 students, but certainly will lose some to attrition, as we always do. Whatever prompts some students to elect to try to perform this public service often is tempered during the 72 hour "Wonder Week" training that occurs one week before the college semester begins in September. Usually some new students decide not to continue in the program and drop out during "Wonder Week" or choose not to return at all.

Most remain with us, and some do go on to choose the fire service as their profession, as evidenced by the 13 former graduates alone who now are career firefighters in Amherst as well as current Massachusetts Fire Chiefs in Athol, Westborough and Amherst (all three career chief officers in Amherst are student force graduates).

The annual "Randy Silveira Memorial Scholarship" was awarded to Deputy Chief Matt Sposito. The \$1000 award is made by the family of Randy Silveira, a 1981 graduate of the Student Force who exemplified character, caring and commitment to the student firefighters and the Town. Randy died in 2003 from cancer and the memorial was established in his honor to reward the student firefighter who best emulated Randy's dedication to the student firefighters.

We look forward to another successful year with our student volunteer firefighters as they have provided to the Town every year since the program's inception in 1953. Without them, and our call firefighters, the Amherst Fire Department could not provide prompt fire and EMS coverage to our citizens.